

THE COMMONWEALTH.

Thursday, Dec. 7, 1882.

E. F. HILLIARD, EDITOR.

ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT SCOTLAND NECK, N. C., AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL MATTER.

NOTICE.—Since the last issue of the COMMONWEALTH we have purchased the entire office and this issue appears under the new regime.

Unexpired terms of subscription and contracts for advertising will be filled, and all moneys due the COMMONWEALTH at time of purchase will be collected by us.

SALUTATORY.

With this issue of THE COMMONWEALTH we make our political bow, and trust that we may creditably and successfully enter the field of journalism.

In starting a paper it is generally customary to state its policy, and we shall not depart from this custom. The paper will be purely Democratic. We believe that the principles of Democracy are necessary to the perpetuity of the Government, and therefore shall fearlessly and boldly maintain them.

However, we have no enemies to punish and no friends to reward, in consequence will strike at the root of all and every evil, and in doing this will not only defend the rights and liberties of the people of Halifax County but of the State and Union.

We shall endeavor to find out the truth and defend it; to know the wrong and condemn it; to search out fraud and expose it; to be with the people, for the people and of the people so far as shall be for the good of all. Principle and not policy will be our motto, and by this we expect to stand or fall. This should be the ruling aim in life and not less in journalism.

With this we come before you and ask and expect only that support which we shall merit.

The State Board of Canvassers have finished the vote for District Congressmen and have awarded certificates to Pool and O'Hara, Republicans; York, Independent; Green, Cox, Seales, Dowd, and Vance, Democrats. Bennett will receive his certificate as soon as Watauga county is officially heard from.

Congress met on Monday of this week, and the President laid before the body, as the Constitution requires, information of the State of the Union, with his recommendations for such legislation as is deemed necessary for the good of the country. The message is quite a long one, devoted mainly to the discussion of the finances, the tariff, internal revenue, taxes and civil service reform.

The receipts in the U. S. Treasury for the last year amount to \$403,525,250.25. Expenditures, \$257,681,439.57, leaving a surplus revenue on hand of \$145,843,810.71. This surplus is more than sufficient to meet the interest on the public debt, and pay off the bonds as they become due; he therefore recommends a reduction of taxation, the abolition of the internal revenue taxes, except those which relate to distilled spirits, and simplification of the machinery of collecting that. He also recommends a revision of the tariff, discusses civil service reform, asks that Congress take action at once, so as to relieve the Executive and heads of departments of the great burden of the appointment of minor officers.

We regard it, on the whole, as a conservative document, and are glad to see that the President is willing to profit by the lesson taught in the last election.

Congress has assembled under circumstances which attract more than the usual public interest. After this session the Republican majority will yield the gavel to its Democratic opponents, and the public curiosity is excited to see how the Republicans will deal with the important question of revenue, which more deeply interests the people now than any other. The present revenue system has been a curse to the country, and the people demand a change as has been shown in the recent elections. In this State the revenue system is the most blasting curse that was ever inflicted on any people. It is the political machine or the Republican party to perpetrate fraud and corruption, and its officers do so without compunction of conscience.

Both parties agree that the income of the government far exceeds its necessities, and that there ought to be a reduction of taxation; but the difference of opinion as to how this reduction had best be made is the exciting question of public interest. There can be no doubt that the Republicans will endeavor to utilize their remaining days of legislative control in meeting the demand of the country for tax

reduction, and as this is a question which more or less affects all citizens, and which may be so disposed of as to materially affect politics, the coming season has the public eye upon it. Besides the revenue question there are others, not of such general importance, but which possess some share of public attention for Congress to deal with. Of course there remains a large quantity of business left over from the last season, but very little of this will receive any attention. As the approaching season is limited to the 4th of March, only such matters as are of public importance will be considered. The appropriation bills will consume a large share of the time, and the revenue question will be given precedence over all others. It is a subject which will make slow progress, and the chances are that of the hundreds of bills coming over from last session, not one out of twenty will ever get beyond the present stage.

Journalists, politicians and others who discuss passing events and the impress which they make upon the body politic are very apt, after a political defeat, to give their opinions as to the cause of the mishap, to pronounce the prominent reasons which brought about the result, and to tell with great confidence and assurance how victory could have been achieved and disasters avoided. This may be of use, but it brings no comfort or consolation, it enlightens no one, it only demonstrates what every one knows that men, only ordinary men—can see how a thing is done after it is done as well as philosophers.

However, we do not propose to abuse this class of actors and thinkers. Our object is to show, in a plain and homely way, how victory may be made more complete and satisfactory, or, in other words, how the Democratic party can carry the State in the future by large majorities. Now is the time to begin to discuss these things. In time of peace prepare for war.

In the first place: It is needless to undertake to conduct a campaign without money. It cannot be done. If it is undertaken, defeat and disaster will surely follow. We do not mean to advocate the use of money for the purpose of corruptly influencing voters. This is an evil that ought to be checked; if it is not, sooner or later, dire consequences will result therefrom. And a law ought to be passed imposing heavy penalties upon any and all men who solicit, directly or indirectly, money from any one holding an office to be used for political purposes. Let the system of political assessments be stopped—it is the evil which threatens our institutions.

Money can be used in a legitimate way for campaign purposes that ought to be commended rather than denounced. Newspapers ought to be sent to every voter who takes none, pamphlets ought to be distributed, statistics of the varied industries should be distributed, the practices and teachings, the traditions and usages, of the different parties ought to be kept before the people. In this way the masses of the people would soon become politically educated and better qualified to vote intelligently. And in this way appeals could be made to the reason rather than to the passions and prejudices as is now too often the case in joint discussions, where he who can play the roll of the demagogue most successfully is generally thought to be the greatest statesman, where repartee and wit are at a high premium and dignified, truthful, legitimate argument is at a discount.

Money used for the purposes of organization is rightly spent. The chairman of our State Executive Committee should be provided with a good working force and with ample means to pay for this work. Our organization must be perfect, and to insure this we must have money. The money for campaign purposes should be raised by the township Committees by soliciting subscriptions. Every good citizen who is interested in good government and who desired the perpetuation of our institutions, ought, if he believed that the principles of the Democratic party are right, to contribute of his means towards insuring the success of that party. The burden ought not to fall on a few. Let every man do his duty.

In the second place: Where offices are to be filled, they ought not to be given to men for no other reason than that they are poor and that they have the honor of being the grandsons of eminent grandfathers, or because they can trace their descent from the veterans of Ronny-mede. This class may be of interest as a sad reminder of integrity, both they make poor officers. Times

have changed and men have changed with them. Let merit, integrity and competency be the criterion by which men are judged. And one office is enough for one man to have at one time. No one man ought to be magistrate, commissioner, and school examiner, or sheriff, treasurer and tax-taker, at the same time. It is true they are small offices and the pay is smaller than the office, but the Democratic party is opposed to centralization and consolidation. Let it be true to its teachings and divide the offices. Then a ring, or a clique, or one man, must not appoint the magistrates. Let the townships recommend their choice and let the legislature respect the selection.

In the third place: There is too much local legislation. Local prohibitory laws will kill any party. Every one on the Statute book ought to be repealed. If a man drinks whiskey and behaves himself, he has a right to drink it; if he does not behave himself, he can be punished. The law is already adequate for the protection of school houses, academies and colleges, religious assemblies and churches. Let men be punished when they violate law, and more good will be accomplished than fifty prohibitory laws will ever do. We are the friends and advocates of temperance and sobriety, but we are certain that these virtues can never be legislated into man. They must be inculcated by moral suasion and education—in the churches, in the Sunday schools, around the fireside. Let the first act of the Legislature be to repeal that odious law which gives five men the power to pass a general prohibition law.

We cannot, in one article, give our views upon all of the evils which are to be remedied, but we will make other suggestions hereafter.

The days of the professional politician are numbered. In a few years he will cease to figure in public affairs, and the brainy man who loves the land in which he lives will have taken his place both in the public service and in the hearts of the people.

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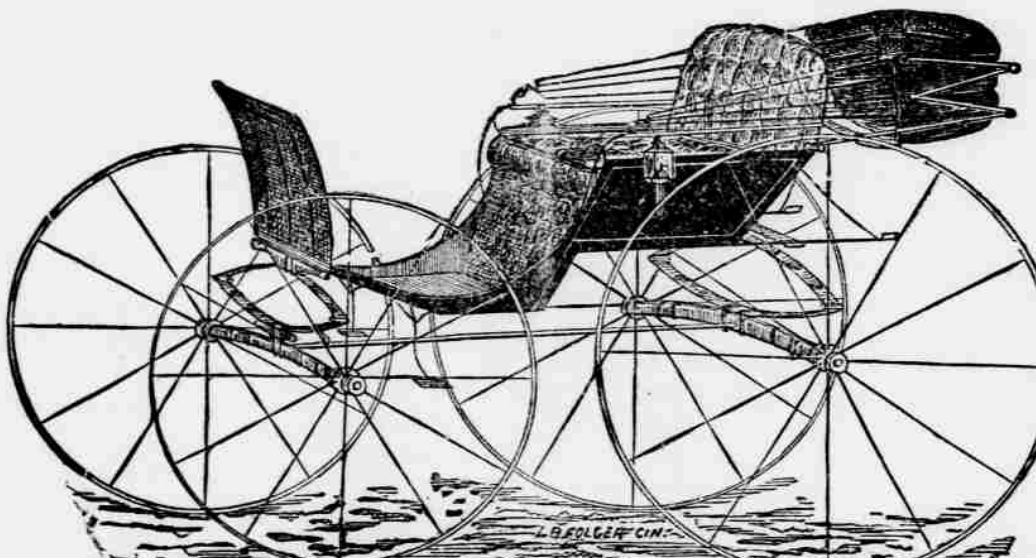
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